



H1N1 Provider Briefing

Date: December 22, 2009
To: All Healthcare Providers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Regional¹; H1N1 predominant circulating strain
Rhode Island²: 356 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths
Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 1.79%, New England Region: 2.30%, Nation: 2.64%

Expansion of H1N1 vaccine availability

HEALTH is expanding H1N1 vaccination after receiving an additional 100,000 doses of vaccine. Healthcare providers enrolled in the H1N1 vaccine program should prioritize adults through age 64 with chronic medical conditions, young adults through age 24, school-aged children who missed their first doses of vaccine at their schools, and caregivers of infants younger than 6 months old for office-based vaccination. As vaccine supply allows, providers may begin administering the vaccine to lower-risk patients, such as healthy adults and seniors. Rhode Island CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, and Stop & Shop pharmacies enrolled in the H1N1 vaccine program should receive their first deliveries of H1N1 vaccine for adults 18 years of age and older by the end of this week. HEALTH will also be partnering with municipalities to organize free public vaccination clinics in January. Please see HEALTH's press release at <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/10408> for more information about expanded H1N1 vaccine availability.

H1N1 vaccination of parents and caregivers of infants younger than six months old

Healthcare providers may now vaccinate parents and caregivers of infants younger than six months old in their practices. HEALTH encourages providers to reach out to this population and encourage them to receive vaccine. Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect these infants, who are too young to be safely vaccinated. New posters encouraging vaccination for parents and caregivers of children with chronic medical conditions and infants younger than six months are available to download and print from HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/prevention/> (Look for the section titled "Educational Resources"). These posters are available in both English and Spanish.

H1N1 vaccination for nursing home residents

The H1N1 vaccine will be available to nursing homes. Nursing homes enrolled as vaccine providers should be receiving H1N1 vaccine for all of their patients by the end of the year. Other nursing homes may order via retail pharmacies as they do for the seasonal flu vaccine. A fax will be sent out to all nursing homes with more information about vaccine ordering and administration.

¹ Rhode Island reported regional activity for the week of December 13 to December 19, 2009. Elevated influenza-like illness and influenza lab confirmed cases were reported in two counties. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable H1N1 hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity reported by 23 sentinel surveillance sites from December 6 to December 12, 2009

H1N1 vaccination of healthcare workers and first responders

Over the next few weeks, healthcare workers and first responders will have the opportunity to receive the H1N1 vaccine through the Healthcare Service Region (HSR) in which they work. Each of Rhode Island's 10 HSRs will hold an H1N1 vaccine point-of-dispensing (POD) clinic for healthcare workers and first responders the weekend of January 9, 2010. HEALTH is expanding vaccination through these POD clinics to any licensed healthcare professional, such as dentists, podiatrists, and mental health workers, and to their clinical staff.

Healthcare Service Region H1N1 Information Lines

Some of the lead hospitals in Rhode Island's Healthcare Service Regions (HSRs) have established H1N1 Information Lines. Healthcare workers and first responders seeking more information about the H1N1 vaccination strategy in their HSRs may call the following numbers:

- **Kent Hospital:** 468-8130
- **Memorial Hospital:** 729-3584
- **Miriam Hospital:** 793-3588
- **Newport Hospital:** 845-4242
- **Rhode Island Hospital:** 444-9FLU (444-9358)
- **Roger Williams Medical Center:** 456-2054
- **South County Hospital:** 788-1641
- **Westerly Hospital:** 348-3900

HEALTH will provide contact information for the Fatima Hospital and Landmark Medical Center HSRs on its website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/facilities/hospitals/about/serviceregions/index.php> and in next week's Provider Briefing as it becomes available. Please continue to direct general questions about H1N1 and Rhode Island's vaccination strategy to HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line, 222-8022.

Recalled vaccines

HEALTH is aware of several recalls of certain lots of H1N1 vaccine over the past few months. As always, providers will be notified by the CDC and by HEALTH about any recalls affecting their vaccine supply. No recalls have yet been related to any safety or efficacy concerns.

Administration technique for the nasal-spray influenza vaccine

For an instructive video developed by the Oregon Public Health Division on the administration technique for the nasal-spray influenza vaccine, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJsYSNEmqZE>.

Clinic dates and locations for out-of-state college students

H1N1 vaccination clinics for Rhode Islanders through age 24 who attend out-of-state colleges and universities will be held on December 30, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on January 6, 2010 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Community College of Rhode Island's Knight Campus in Warwick. **Anyone who has already pre-registered should have received an email explaining the need to complete a second registration to choose a preferred date and time for vaccination.** Those students who have not yet pre-registered must visit HEALTH's website to complete the registration process. Registration for both clinics will close on December 26. Registration is required to attend these clinics, and walk-ins will be turned away.

School-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine

On January 4, HEALTH will post on its website (www.health.ri.gov) a schedule for school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine. Beginning on January 11, this second round of clinics will span approximately four weeks. Only children who were younger than 10 years of age at the time of their schools' first H1N1 vaccination clinics will be vaccinated at upcoming clinics. Children who are 10 years of age and older do not require second doses of H1N1 vaccine. For the answers to frequently asked questions about second doses of H1N1 vaccine, see

<http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/FAQsAboutSchoolClinicsForSecondDosesOfH1N1Vaccine.pdf>

Final uptake numbers for the first round of school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics

During the first round of HEALTH's H1N1 school-based vaccination program, 120,930 school-aged children received the H1N1 vaccine in 421 school-based clinics.

Lifting of visitor restrictions in hospitals

Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro Children's Hospital, Miriam Hospital and Newport Hospital have lifted visitor restrictions on children younger than 18 years of age. However, both children and adults experiencing the symptoms of influenza-like illness (fever and a cough or fever and a sore throat) should not visit patients in these hospitals until after they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Holiday Provider Briefing and Information Line schedule

Over the next two weeks, HEALTH will release one weekly Provider Briefing on Tuesdays (December 29 and January 5).

HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line (401-222-8022) will close at noon on December 24 and December 31 and will be closed all day on December 25 and January 1. The Information Line will otherwise keep its normal hours this holiday season – Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Responders on this line are prepared to answer H1N1-related questions in English and Spanish.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived provider briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>